**Characters**

- Victor, Italian-American, early fifties
- Balthazar, Latino, mid-thirties
- Rooftop, African-American, mid-forties
- Father Lux, white, mid-seventies
- Flip, African-American, thirty-seven
- Gail, white, thirty-seven
- Inez, African-American, late thirties
- Norca, Latina, late thirties
- Edwin, Latino, late thirties
- Pinky, Latino, late thirties
- Marcia, white, mid-thirties
- Sonia, white, early thirties

**Act 1**

**Act 1, Scene 1**

ACT I: LATE MORNING

**Scene 1: Ortiz Funeral Home. Main viewing room. Balthazar and Vic stand in front of an empty casket.**

VICTOR

What kinda fuckin' world is this?!

BALTHAZAR

Mmm.

VICTOR

I mean, am I alone here?!

BALTHAZAR

"Alone," "not alone" —

VICTOR

What did she ever do anyway, huh?! What did Rose ever do till the day she died but be a fuckin' living saint

on this earth to deserve this … this sacrilege!

BALTHAZAR

Sister Rose was a good woman.

VICTOR

There are limits — I don't give a shit! Maybe you grew up in a godless jungle, but I remember when the world was not this! And this? This is *not* the world!

BALTHAZAR

Okay.

VICTOR

Her fuckin' father, he should rot in hell! That's first off! Demons should shit in his mouth daily, the Irish punk! Don't take much guts to beat on a woman, ya get me?

BALTHAZAR

I wasn't aware of her history —

VICTOR

Why you think she became a nun anyway, beautiful girl like that? All this "needle exchange," "alcoholic drunk tank" she had runnin' up here? "Gangs" this, "stop the violence" that? All that thankless shit she did? Was it because she was a good person? Sure. But if ya look underneath it all, it's two things: she donned the habit because she was terrified of intimacy, and all them programs was a way to atone for the sins of her fuckin' piece-of-dirt Shanty-Irish Mick-fuck father!

BALTHAZAR

Hey, what's your name?

VICTOR

My name?

BALTHAZAR

Yeah, friend, tell me your name.

VICTOR

It's Victor. Why?

BALTHAZAR

You wanna drink, Vic? A little nip? Take the edge off?

VICTOR

I prefer to keep my edge on, pal.

*(*BALTHAZAR *drinks from a half-pint bottle.)*

BALTHAZAR

Gotta ask you about your pants, Vic.

VICTOR

My pants?

BALTHAZAR

You are aware that you're not wearing pants?

VICTOR

Of course I'm aware — they stole 'em!

BALTHAZAR

Where'd you sleep last night, Vic?

VICTOR

I slept here last night, and my name is Victor, not Vic.

BALTHAZAR

That's quite uncommon, isn't it? A mourner sleeping over at a wake?

VICTOR

What are you, a cop?

BALTHAZAR

No, Vic, I'm a farmer. I came here to sell some eggs.

VICTOR

You accusing me of something?!

BALTHAZAR

I'm sorry. I'm not accusing, sir, just, I get a call, I come here, there's a man ranting in his underwear, a missing corpse, no sign of forced entry — and it's not the corpse of Ned the Wino or Bobo the Clown that's been stolen, it's our Sister Rose, sir. Sister Rose.

VICTOR

Look, I came over in the mornin' yesterday, it was a fuckin' mad house in here, okay?! Crackhead junkies, politicians, reporters, screaming babies, I had ta leave. I came back at closin', tossed the funeral guy a couple

hundred bucks … I wanted, I needed a little time, all right?!

BALTHAZAR

Okay.

VICTOR

I knew her my whole life since we were six, for Christ's sake.

BALTHAZAR

I understand.

VICTOR

These fuckin' people, yesterday? Some of them showin' up in dirty jeans and T-shirts?! Eating pizza?! Little kids with video games makin' loud electrical noises?! I mean, "What goes on here," no?! … I saw one mothahfuckah kneelin' in front of Rose's casket, he's prayin', then his fuckin' cell phone goes off and he … he fuckin' answers it!! Has a goddamn conversation

in Spanish, and not a short one … Talkin' loud too — "Mira, mira, mira" — kneelin' over her fuckin' casket!! I mean, what the fuck is that, mister?! Can you tell me?! Cuz I'm at a loss over here —
BALTHAZAR

Grief takes different forms.

VICTOR

That ain't grief! I don't know what the fuck that is, but it ain't grief!

BALTHAZAR

I once knew a guy — hey now, listen ta me.

VICTOR

I'm here.

BALTHAZAR

True Story: I once knew a guy, a coupla detectives went to his apartment to inform him that his son had been raped and murdered in the playground up on a hundred thirty-seventh —

VICTOR

Jesus…

BALTHAZAR

You know what his reaction was? And keep in mind this is a man who loved his son dearly, okay? His reaction was: He wouldn't leave the house to I˙D˙ the body until after the Knicks game was over… It was "the playoffs," he said. They watched the whole fourth quarter together in silence. He served them ham sandwiches with warm beer. And this is a man who lived … for his son.

*(*BALTHAZAR *takes another swig from his bottle.)*

BALTHAZAR

I am going to close this casket now. You are going to go outside and speak to my partner. He will secure you a new pair of pants. Where you live, Vic? Brooklyn? Queens?

VICTOR

Staten Island.

BALTHAZAR

We'll have a squad car drive you home.

VICTOR

I'm here for the duration.

BALTHAZAR

Okay. Crime Scene needs to work through this room now, Vic. When they're done, the room will be open again. Okay?

VICTOR

Fine.

BALTHAZAR

My partner's outside in front of a black-and-gray Ford. Ya can't miss him, he's Chinese and he walks with a pronounced limp.

VICTOR

For the record, I had nuthin' to do with this.

BALTHAZAR

I don't think that you did.

VICTOR

Just make sure you catch the mothahfuckah.

BALTHAZAR

Sister Rose was my teacher. I liked her very much.

VICTOR

Ya know, if Rudy were still in office, this woulda never happened — I'm sure of it. He wouldn't of took this lyin' down for two seconds.

BALTHAZAR

My partner — he's right outside.

VICTOR

Right … Say … Did they ever catch that guy?

BALTHAZAR

What guy?

VICTOR

The guy who murdered the kid.

BALTHAZAR

No … No, not yet.

VICTOR

What, uh, what ever happened to the guy with the ham sandwiches?

BALTHAZAR

The guy with the ham sandwiches?

VICTOR

Yeah …

BALTHAZAR

Why? You want one?

VICTOR

One what?

BALTHAZAR

A ham sandwich.

VICTOR

Do I …?

BALTHAZAR

It's a joke, Vic. I'm joking.

VICTOR

Not funny. Not funny at all.

**Act 1, Scene 2**

Scene 2: The church. Walter "Rooftop" Desmond confesses.

ROOFTOP

Bless me, Father, for I have sinned …

*(pause)*

… a lot, know what I'm sayin? … Yes, sir … Um … Are you there, Father?

FATHER LUX

Yes.

ROOFTOP

All right, juss checkin' … That you, Father Martin?

FATHER LUX

Uh, no.

ROOFTOP

Father Cunningham?

FATHER LUX

No.

ROOFTOP

Oh … Where Father Cunningham at?

FATHER LUX

Excuse me?

ROOFTOP

I say, where Father Cunningham at?

FATHER LUX

Father Cunningham?

ROOFTOP

Yeah.

FATHER LUX

He's — no longer with us.

ROOFTOP

Father C, you talkin' 'bout?

FATHER LUX

Yes.

ROOFTOP

"No longer with us," huh?

FATHER LUX

Yes.

ROOFTOP

Father C?

FATHER LUX

Correct.

ROOFTOP

He didn't do something "bad," did he?

FATHER LUX

He's dead.

ROOFTOP

Dead?!

FATHER LUX

With God, yes.

ROOFTOP

Well, pardon me, but — why didn't you just say that then?

FATHER LUX

What?

ROOFTOP

I'm sayin', if the man's dead, juss say he dead.

FATHER LUX

I did.

ROOFTOP

Nah, you said "no longer with us" — like … like a "scandal" or something.

FATHER LUX

Are you here to make confession, sir?

ROOFTOP

Yes, I am, but Father C was a close, personal friend of mine, and I can't really appreciate —

FATHER LUX

Father Cunningham has been dead for fifteen years, sir, okay?!

*(Pause)*

ROOFTOP

Oh … Okay … Sorry …

FATHER LUX

… So *how* long since your last confession?

ROOFTOP

My *last* confession?

FATHER LUX

Yes.

ROOFTOP

The last one?

FATHER LUX

Yes.

ROOFTOP

You mean in a church?

FATHER LUX

In a church, yes.

ROOFTOP

Right. Well … last one been …

FATHER LUX

Yes.

ROOFTOP

Well … well, it's *been* … Know what I'm sayin'? It's *been* been. Definitely been been.

FATHER LUX

Okay.

ROOFTOP

Put it like this: my first confession?, that was my last time checkin' in with y'all, so, yeah, been a while … been … well …

FATHER LUX

Got it. Proceed.

ROOFTOP

Cuz I mean, ya know, my moms raised me right, went to school right upstairs, listened ta the nuns, Sister Rose and all, still … Shit! Is Father C really dead?!

FATHER LUX

What?

ROOFTOP

Cuz I was hopin' ta get Father C˙

FATHER LUX

Sir —

ROOFTOP

Guess everybody got ta go, right?

FATHER LUX

Yes.

ROOFTOP

Still, how's a man gonna up and die with no warning?

FATHER LUX

Sir —

ROOFTOP

Send a telegram, sumpthin': "Might die soon. FYI."

FATHER LUX

Perhaps you ought to collect yourself and come back later.

ROOFTOP

Hey Father, did you know that Father C one time got hit by a Mack truck but he was okay?

FATHER LUX

Sir —

ROOFTOP

See, us kids, we was playin' Booties Up on the wall across from here, but we was all standin' in the street like fools do, and —

FATHER LUX

Stop.

ROOFTOP

What, I can't relate a little anecdote?

FATHER LUX

What you can do, sir, is confess.

ROOFTOP

Confess, huh?

FATHER LUX

Confess your sins. Yes.

ROOFTOP

Dag, you all business, ain't cha, Father?

FATHER LUX

Sir —

ROOFTOP

No prelude nuthin' — just spit it out.

FATHER LUX

Sir —

ROOFTOP

— "Early birds eat apples and worms," I gotcha — got no argument wit' that.

FATHER LUX

Okay then.

ROOFTOP

You got a forthright nature, Father — no nonsense — I respect that in a man.

FATHER LUX

Oh. Well —

ROOFTOP

Still, even Hank Aaron hit a few off the practice tee before he stepped up to the rock — gotta marinate before ya grill, right?

FATHER LUX

This is not a "cook-out," sir.

ROOFTOP

No, it's not —

FATHER LUX

No charcoal, no anecdotes, no franks and beans —

ROOFTOP

True dat —

FATHER LUX

This is, in fact, a Confessional, sir. A *C*onfess *ional* — not a "Conversational." Do you understand that distinction?

ROOFTOP

I'll keep it moving.

FATHER LUX

Thank you.

ROOFTOP

Ok … right: So … So, yeah — I mean, whaddyacallit? The interVenal Sins?

FATHER LUX

Venal.

ROOFTOP

What?

FATHER LUX

Venal.

ROOFTOP

Venal yeah — mucho venal. Venal Sins. Dass daily, daily occurrence. Prolly racked up a dozen since I walked up in

here … And, uh, Mortal Sins? Mortal Sins, Father? I mean, "pick a Commandment, any Commandment," know what I'm sayin'?
FATHER LUX

How 'bout *you* pick one?

ROOFTOP

Oh … okay … uh … Dag, Father, I'm juss, I'm juss a bad man, Father. Lyin', cheatin', stealin', and humpin' — Dag. Freebasing … See, I'm the kind a guy — one time I … well, there was this girl once … Say Father, I can't smoke in here, right?

**Act 1, Scene 3**

Scene 3: Flip and Gail by the bathroom — midstream

FLIP

Do not act like a faggot!

GAIL SAUNDERS

Excuse you?

FLIP

Put your collar down!

GAIL SAUNDERS

My collar?

FLIP

Where'd that scarf come from?! You were not wearing that scarf when we left the hotel, Gail!

GAIL SAUNDERS

You said we were coming here as a couple, Robert!

FLIP

And I changed my mind! And you know that I changed my mind because I been tellin' you all fuckin' morning, Gail, that I changed my fuckin' mind — so just lose the scarf, do not act like a faggot, and stop calling me fuckin' "Robert"!

GAIL SAUNDERS

What should I call you? Penelope?

FLIP

Flip, Goddamnit! For the fifty-eighth time, they call me Flip!

GAIL SAUNDERS

Flip what? Flip a pancake? Flip a flappy Flip Flop?

FLIP

Gail —

GAIL SAUNDERS

Maybe I should have a special name too, like … "Rocky."

FLIP

Stop it —

GAIL SAUNDERS

I could be "Hercules," grow a beard.

FLIP

Look! You're an "actor," right? So juss act like you're not a faggot for a few fuckin' hours if that's not fuckin' beneath you, okay?!

GAIL SAUNDERS

*Cursing.*

FLIP

I will not have this today, Gail! Do you hear me? Will not have it!

GAIL SAUNDERS

Will not have what, Robert? A relationship? A partner? The respect of the man who lies beside you at night?

FLIP

You know who I am, and you know how I feel about you!

GAIL SAUNDERS

Do I?

FLIP

Don't do this today, Gail.

GAIL SAUNDERS

*My* friends embraced you, Robert! My parents took you in!

FLIP

Your friends are all gay, Gail, and your parents trumpet my race and sexuality with unconcealed glee 'cuz it makes them feel like better liberals!

GAIL SAUNDERS

I'm going to tell them you said that!

FLIP

Good. Why don't you hop on the next plane and tell them in person.

GAIL SAUNDERS

Do you really mean that? Do you?

FLIP

You know what? I ain't even tryin' ta have this conversation!

GAIL SAUNDERS

"Ain't even tryin' "?!

FLIP

Dass what I said!

GAIL SAUNDERS

Right, "Assimilation." Going back ta the " 'hood," can't be you, gotta be someone you never were.

FLIP

Careful now —

GAIL SAUNDERS

No, Robert, you're the one who should be careful! Didn't you ever see "The Death of Sunny" with Shelley Winters?

FLIP

Gail —

GAIL SAUNDERS

Sunny Waldman denied her Jewishness before a Nazi tribunal to avoid the death camps — and what happened to Sunny? She became a morphine-addicted harlot who ended up wandering into the forests of Bavaria to be consumed by wolves and jackals — that's what! Denial's like a pair of Prada silk pajamas, Robert — the price is just too high!

FLIP

Look, Drama Empress: Just turn it down a few notches and be here for me. Quite and dignified. Can you do that, yes or no?!

GAIL SAUNDERS

"Turn it down a few notches"?

FLIP

Yes or no, Gail!

GAIL SAUNDERS

I am not a drama Empress!

FLIP

I am begging you, okay? Begging.

GAIL SAUNDERS

On my worst day, I'm more masculine than you.

FLIP

Gail —

GAIL SAUNDERS

I'm like a young Al Pacino: intense, soulful —

FLIP

Oh, you aren't a "young" anything, Gail! And you certainly, *certainly,* ain't no Al Pacino!

*(*INEZ *exits bathroom.)*

INEZ

Flip Johnson, shit!! Is that really you??!!

FLIP

Inez Smith?! Dag, girl, you're lookin' too fine! Oh, Jesus — how long it's been?

INEZ

Nevah mind all that. You look so good, Flip! How come you look so good?

FLIP

'Cuz I'm lookin' at you, Inez Smith!

INEZ

Aw, Flip! Flip! Who's this man, Flip?

FLIP

Ah, Inez, I'd like you to meet my colleague, this is —

GAIL SAUNDERS

Goliath. Goliath Muscleton.

INEZ

Goliath, huh?

FLIP

Goliath is one of my partners at the firm.

INEZ

Oh, well, that's nice.

FLIP

Yeah, it is.

INEZ

I guess things must be pretty progressive out there in Wisconsin. Maybe I should move there.

GAIL SAUNDERS

What do you mean?

INEZ

I mean, a black man and a gay man, partners in the same firm —

FLIP

I'm not gay, Inez.

INEZ

I'm not talkin' 'bout you, honey, I'm talkin' 'bout Goliath here.

*(To* GAIL *)*

Now you stay away from my man now, girl —

FLIP

Say. How's Rooftop doin'?

INEZ

Oh, Me and Walter divorced fifteen years now, baby. I hope the bastard's got leukemia.

GAIL SAUNDERS

*(To* INEZ *)*

So I look gay to you, but "Flip" doesn't? I wonder why that is?

FLIP

Maybe 'cuz you homosexual, and I'm not.

*(To* INEZ *)*

Now how's that for a theory?

INEZ

Sounds good to me. Anyway, I'm gettin' ready to move on, Flip. I gotta go meet Norca before the wake.

FLIP

Nasty Norca? How is she?

INEZ

Fucked up and forgotten, so I'm told … Haven't seen her in years.

FLIP

Now, why's that?

INEZ

Cuz she slept wit' Walter, fuckin' ho.

FLIP

Say what?!

INEZ

Please. Walter cherry-popped every Jordache bubble-butt from Ninety-sixth on up, served me right to be so

damn naive … Comin' home with tar stains all on his sweatpants. Pigeon feathers. And ta think, I thought y'all called him, "Rooftop" 'cuz he was tall … We gonna have a drink tonight, baby?

FLIP

Shit, "Do a cow got lips"?

INEZ

Do a cow got *what?*! "Lips," Flip?!

FLIP

It's, it's an expression …

INEZ

"Do a cow got lips"?! Oh, Flip Johnson, you are just so cute I could eat your little fine-ass self alive —

FLIP

You know how we do —

INEZ

You done Gone Country up there in Wisconsin, ain't cha?!

GAIL SAUNDERS

Yee-haw.

INEZ

"Do a cow got lips"? — I'm a haveta try that one out on my peoples in Bed-Stuy! —

FLIP

Anyway — tonight baby, after: it's you, me, and a pitcher a margaritas — and I'll be lookin' forward to *that.*

INEZ

All right then … Flip, do I look old?

FLIP

Girl, you're The Fountain of Youth.

INEZ

Thank you. Well, nice to meet you, Ulysses.

FLIP

Goliath.

INEZ

Shame about Sister Rose, huh? I heard they found her on the curb.

FLIP

Heart attack?

INEZ

Alcohol.

FLIP

What?

INEZ

Yeah, now they can't find her at all.

FLIP

How you mean?

INEZ

They stole her body and the pants off a white man.

FLIP

What?

INEZ

They gonna bury an empty box in the mornin' if she don't turn up. Well … Bye, baby.

*(*INEZ *exits.)*

*(Pause)*

GAIL SAUNDERS

What were you inferring when you said that I "certainly, *certainly,* ain't no Al Pacino"?

FLIP

What?!

GAIL SAUNDERS

I want to know what you meant by that.

FLIP

Gail?!

GAIL SAUNDERS

Because if you're inferring that I'm not a good actor —

FLIP

Gail, I just got some unsettling news.

GAIL SAUNDERS

So did I. According to you, I can't act!

FLIP

Why are you talking about this?!

GAIL SAUNDERS

And you didn't just say "certainly," you said "certainly, *certainly,*" like, "Oh, certainly, certainly" —

FLIP

Go back to the hotel, Gail!

GAIL SAUNDERS

I don't want to be with somebody who doesn't respect what I do!

FLIP

Oh, yeah?! Well, you're a fuckin' lousy actor, Gail — not "not good," lousy! You're the worst actor in the state of Wisconsin — and that's no easy feat!

GAIL SAUNDERS

That's not true.

FLIP

Oh, it is true! When's the last time you made a fuckin' dime acting anyway? Never! That's when.

GAIL SAUNDERS

I studied with Lee Strasberg!

FLIP

That's prolly what killed him!

*(*FLIP *drinks from the flask.)*

GAIL SAUNDERS

You're upset, you're angry with me, that's why you're being cruel right now, saying things that you know aren't true.

FLIP

I *know* when I go to a theater and something sucks ass, Gail!

GAIL SAUNDERS

If you're referring to my Torvald —

FLIP

I'm referring to your everything! You did that show with the kids and fuckin' five-year-olds were acting circles 'round you! Everything you're in, you're the worst fucking one! Ask our friends! Ask anyone who knows you! You *suck,* okay?! You accuse me of denial?! Look at your own self, Gail!

GAIL SAUNDERS

At least …

FLIP

At least what? I know who I am — I'm a lawyer, Gail! And what are you — other than a fuckin' self-centered, drunk, swishing community theater housewife!

GAIL SAUNDERS

I am not that fem.

FLIP

Whatever!

GAIL SAUNDERS

So you admit I'm not that fem?

*(*FLIP *drinks.)*

FLIP

I am so tolerant of your weaknesses, Gail. I really am. But you? You have no empathy for anything that goes against what you want when you want it.

GAIL SAUNDERS

Robert —

FLIP

You think joint checking was easy for me? I have your name on everything that's mine, and I've put in the work every day

for the last two years to allow myself to keep growing closer to you.
GAIL SAUNDERS

And I applaud that —

FLIP

Inez ain't stupid, Gail. All I asked for was the respect to handle my business, in my neighborhood, with my people, at my own pace and in my own way. You couldn't even give me that.

GAIL SAUNDERS

Where you goin'?

FLIP

I don't know.

GAIL SAUNDERS

Can I come?

FLIP

Get away.

*(*FLIP *exits.)*

GAIL SAUNDERS

So are we still together?

**Act 1, Scene 4**

Scene 4: Norca and Balthazar, a hallway in the funeral home. Midstream.

BALTHAZAR

Last night, Norca, between ten p˙m˙ and nine a˙m˙, where were you?

NORCA

I was at your mother's house fuckin' her in her ass wid a strap on — dass where I was!

BALTHAZAR

Very funny.

NORCA

You see anybody laughin'? I know your mothah ain't laughin' — I drove that bitch's head thru the wall, her hair all covered in plaster an' shit … I could go now, "Ossifer"?!

BALTHAZAR

Detective.

NORCA

Rent-a-cop! Fisher Price Bitch!!

*(*BALTHAZAR *takes a drink from his flask.)*

BALTHAZAR

Where are your kids these days, Norca? Spofford? Foster care? Rikers?

NORCA

Where's your kid, Balthazar? Oh, yeah — he in a cemetery, all raped up and dead, ain't that right, Mr˙ Parent?! Mr˙ Judgmental alcoholic mothahfuckah!

*(*BALTHAZAR *smiles.)*

BALTHAZAR

I hope you took her, Norca.

NORCA

Took who?

BALTHAZAR

"Took who"?

NORCA

I ain't stuttered. Took who, mothahfuckah?!

BALTHAZAR

You're very smart, Norca. You always been smart. That brain of yours, it hurts to carry it around, doesn't it?

NORCA

It's been five seconds, Balthazar, don't you need another drink?

BALTHAZAR

The next time I take you into custody, Norca, I won't slap you on the wrist. No, the next time, Norca, I'm gonna send your ass to Bellevue —

NORCA

Fuck you —

BALTHAZAR

And when you get to Bellevue, you gonna bug out, Norca! You gonna hit somebody, or wild out somehow, and they gonna start medicating your ass. Then, you gonna be real fucked up, and they gonna send you to Creedmore for mental rehabilitation! You know you can't sign yourself out of Creedmore, right?

NORCA

Why you fuckin' with me?

BALTHAZAR

You must've visited Creedmore, right? Half your family passed through there, no? That brain of yours, Norca? That brain you love so much even though it's killin' you? Creedmore gonna snatch that brain, Norca. Snatchy, snatchy, no more brain! No more Norca. They gonna snatch your brain, and before you know it, you gonna weigh three hundred pounds, have hair where God didn't intend, and you gonna have one of those faces — you know those faces I'm talking about, right Norca? The institutionalized face? The "no more brain, smile like a three-year-old" face? The "I've been downgraded from a human to a mammal" face. No more Nasty Norca, you're gonna be a mammal!

NORCA

I ain't no mammal!

BALTHAZAR

Then tell me where she is!

NORCA

Where who is?!

BALTHAZAR

Where is she?

NORCA

Where is mothahfuckin' who?!

BALTHAZAR

Where is she?

NORCA

I don't know what you talkin' 'bout!

BALTHAZAR

You're lyin'.

NORCA

No I ain't!

BALTHAZAR

You're a fuckin' liar.

NORCA

Don't be breathin' up on me!

BALTHAZAR

Liar.

NORCA

Liar, what?!

BALTHAZAR

Where is she?

NORCA

Where is who?!

BALTHAZAR

Where is she?

NORCA

You want me to bust you in your mothahfuckin' face?!

BALTHAZAR

Yes. I would like very much for you to bust me in my mothahfuckin' face, Mammal Girl. Please hit me. Please.

NORCA

I'll do it, ya drunk-ass bitch!

BALTHAZAR

Please.

NORCA

I will!

BALTHAZAR

Hit me. Right now, Norca. Hit me now!

**Act 1, Scene 5**

Scene 5: Edwin and Pinky, funeral home waiting room.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

*(To himself)*

"Sister Rose Marie was a very special person. I, personally, had her for Homeroom for First Grade, and for

Second Grade, and then for Second Grade again, and then for Second Grade one more time, which is why I respected

*(*no, not respected *),*

which is why, even though she beat my ass wit a shillelagh

*(*nah, dat ain't right *)*

…

PINKY VELASQUEZ

Edwin —

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

"We always loved her, even when we didn't."

PINKY VELASQUEZ

Edwin —

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Shut up, Pinky, I'm tryin' ta put my thoughts in place —

PINKY VELASQUEZ

Oh … okay.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Put that cigarette out, you can't smoke in here.

PINKY VELASQUEZ

Sorry —

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Wait. Gimme a drag first … "We loved her 'cuz" …

PINKY VELASQUEZ

You want a fresh one?

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Nah … Yeah. Whatchu smokin'?

PINKY VELASQUEZ

Kool Breeze.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Kool Breeze? What the fuck kinda brand is dat?

PINKY VELASQUEZ

Two dollah eighty-five.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Fuck dat … You got any chocolate?

PINKY VELASQUEZ

I could get some.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

You could get me two packs a Yodels?

PINKY VELASQUEZ

You wanna juss split a box?

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Nah … Yeah. You need money?

PINKY VELASQUEZ

Maybe juss like four dollahs.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

In other words, you need money.

PINKY VELASQUEZ

I guess.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

So juss say dat then.

PINKY VELASQUEZ

I didn't wanna upset your concentration.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Well, it's upset.

PINKY VELASQUEZ

Sorry.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Not on account a you, Pink, all right?

PINKY VELASQUEZ

Okay.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Are you sayin' "okay" like you believe me? Or are you juss sayin', "okay"?

PINKY VELASQUEZ

Like I believe you.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Are you sure? I doan wanna see you start cryin', 'cuz I juss couldn't handle that right now.

PINKY VELASQUEZ

I ain't gonna cry.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

I mean, if you feel like cryin', cry. 'Cuz I doan wanna stifle your feelin's or nuthin' —

PINKY VELASQUEZ

I ain't stifled.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

It's juss, I need you strong over here.

PINKY VELASQUEZ

I'm strong. Wanna feel my muscle?

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Look, here's a twenty-dollah bill, okay? Wit the Yodels? Get a quart a milk.

PINKY VELASQUEZ

Okay.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Regular, not skim or some shit. The red one.

PINKY VELASQUEZ

I know.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

And check the date. On the Yodels too. Grab the milk from the back.

PINKY VELASQUEZ

I got three girlfriends, Edwin.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

That's great. Bring me the change.

PINKY VELASQUEZ

They're all pretty … except one.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

I gotta get back to this, Pinky.

PINKY VELASQUEZ

Okay. You're gonna make a great analogy, Edwin.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Eulogy, Pinky. Not analogy. Eulogy.

PINKY VELASQUEZ

I'm gonna tell her all about it when I get home.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Great … Tell who?

PINKY VELASQUEZ

Sister Rose.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Pinky … Bro … Sister Rose is dead, you know dat, right?

PINKY VELASQUEZ

I know.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Dead, like, dead.

PINKY VELASQUEZ

I know.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Like Mom and Dad, right?

PINKY VELASQUEZ

Yeah. And the super, Mr˙ Regal.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Yeah … Dead like them, right?

PINKY VELASQUEZ

In Heaven.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Dass right.

PINKY VELASQUEZ

Eatin' cheeseburgers …

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Watchin' Pay-Per-View for free with the Blessed Mother and Saint Anthony, and Mom and Dad …

PINKY VELASQUEZ

And Mr˙ Regal.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Yes. Now, Pinky, when Balthazar's partner came in here and asked us those questions, you answered the truth, right?

PINKY VELASQUEZ

Whaddya mean?

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

I mean, if I were to go up to our apartment right now, I wouldn't find anyone that ain't supposed to be there, right?

PINKY VELASQUEZ

You mean like Mrs˙ McNulty's cat?

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Never mind. Go get the Yodels now.

PINKY VELASQUEZ

I wantcha to meet my girlfriends.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

I'm lookin' forward to it. Yodels. Go.

*(Pause)*

PINKY VELASQUEZ

I didn't mean to upset your concentration, Edwin.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

I know that, Pinky.

PINKY VELASQUEZ

I think … Can I say something, Edwin?

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Is it sumpthin' short?

PINKY VELASQUEZ

Pretty short.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

So say it then.

PINKY VELASQUEZ

Actually, it's two things.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

I didn't agree to hearing two things, Pinky.

PINKY VELASQUEZ

I'll make it quick.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Juss fuckin' say it already.

PINKY VELASQUEZ

Okay. Do you think that girl Norca is gonna be here today, and can I have a hug please?

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

How many hugs have I given you today?

PINKY VELASQUEZ

Only like six.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

So go get the Yodels and milk, bring me the change, and I'll give you another hug. How's that?

PINKY VELASQUEZ

A long hug?

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Would you just get the fuckin' Yodels already?!

PINKY VELASQUEZ

Oh. Okay … What about Norca?

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Forget about Norca. She don't like you. Eat some Yodels and forget about that shit.

PINKY VELASQUEZ

I really would feel better if you —

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Oh, fuckin' "Jesus fuckin' Christ" Pinky! Come over here!

*(*PINKY *crosses to* EDWIN. *They hug.* MARCIA *enters.)*

MARCIA COOK

Oh, excuse me.

PINKY VELASQUEZ

Hello, lady.

MARCIA COOK

Hi …

*(smells)*

Was someone smoking in here?

PINKY VELASQUEZ

You wanna be my girlfriend?

MARCIA COOK

Uh, I don't know. Maybe? …

PINKY VELASQUEZ

I'm going to get some Yodels for me and my brother Edwin.

MARCIA COOK

Oh.

PINKY VELASQUEZ

You look like Sister Rose.

MARCIA COOK

She was my aunt.

PINKY VELASQUEZ

I'm getting Yodels now.

MARCIA COOK

Well, nice to meet you.

PINKY VELASQUEZ

Can I touch your butt?

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Pinky! Go get the Yodels.

PINKY VELASQUEZ

Okay, Bye, lady.

*(*PINKY *exits.)*

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Hello, sorry for that. I'm, uh, Edwin Velasquez.

MARCIA COOK

Marcia Cook, could you open up that window, please?!

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

It's closed 'cuz of the A˙C˙

MARCIA COOK

So smoke outside!! I'm sorry, but I'm an asthmatic!

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Ass-what?

MARCIA COOK

Asthma? Hello! I have asthma. I mean the sign says: "Prohibido Fumar," right? But, of course, *I'm the bitch,* just because other people don't give a hoot about anyone else except themselves, so they have no goddamned —

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Hey, look —

MARCIA COOK

I mean, I could die! Okay?! I could literally have an asthma attack and drop dead right here! So I'd appreciate it if you would stop gawking at me and open the damn window before I start to really get upset!

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

It's open, it's open!

MARCIA COOK

I'm really sorry —

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Apology accepted.

MARCIA COOK

Apology? See, that's the whole problem right there. I shouldn't have to go off on people and get labeled some kind of overreacting person just to get them to obey a damn law which they're supposed to just obey because it's the goddamn law! I shouldn't have to even ask!

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

You're very right —

MARCIA COOK

I mean, *I* didn't put up that "No Smoking" sign.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

No, you didn't.

MARCIA COOK

'Cuz if there was a sign here that said "Smoking: Mucho Gusto!!" I would've just not said a word and suffered silently and possibly died; or I would've just found another place to sit, like outside in the stifling humidity or something, okay, because — Don't look at me like that!

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Like what?

MARCIA COOK

Like I'm some kind of lunatic, or bitch, or rabble rouser!

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

What's a rabble rouser?

*(*MARCIA *collapses.)*

MARCIA COOK

Oh, my God!

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

What's wrong?

MARCIA COOK

Palpitations!

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Palpi-who?

MARCIA COOK

Danger! Danger!

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

What should I do?

MARCIA COOK

My inhaler … please … my bag!

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

What? This?

MARCIA COOK

Oh, God … Yes … Thank …

*(*MARCIA *inhales deeply several times.)*

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Should I call 911?

MARCIA COOK

No! Oh, God! Danger! I'm — "count ten, Marcia" — ten, nine, five —

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Eight!

MARCIA COOK

Eight?

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

*(helping her)*

Seven …

MARCIA COOK

Six?

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Dass right —

MARCIA & EDWIN

Five … four … three … two … one.

*(Pause)*

MARCIA COOK

Oh, my God.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

That was scary.

MARCIA COOK

Oh, my God.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

It's okay.

MARCIA COOK

Hold me?

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Yeah … Yeah, sure.

*(*EDWIN *cradles* MARCIA. *A beat.)*

MARCIA COOK

You saved my life.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Actually, I was one of the smokers that caused your conniption.

MARCIA COOK

Look, I rarely feel grateful for anything, so could you just shut up and let me be grateful for a second?

*(Pause)*

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

You're a very strange lady.

MARCIA COOK

Ssh.

*(Pause)*

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Are you sad about Sister Rose's body gettin' vicked?

MARCIA COOK

No.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Do you think —

MARCIA COOK

Pipe down! People get so intimidated by silence, they just wanna talk, talk, talk —

*(Pause)*

MARCIA COOK

Are you touching my breast?

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

That was accidental.

MARCIA COOK

Oh.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

You were very nice to my brother.

MARCIA COOK

Well, I was raised to be kind to the disabled. I mean …

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

That's okay.

MARCIA COOK

I didn't mean to imply —

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

He ain't retarded, he just suffered a accident when we was little. I accidentally threw a brick out the window which ended up on his head.

MARCIA COOK

I'm sorry.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Are you … are you crying?

MARCIA COOK

I just … anytime I see someone like that, you know, it just makes me very sad, like I should be nicer to people … or

devote more time to charities. Something … something. You know?
EDWIN VELASQUEZ

So why don't you just do that then?

MARCIA COOK

What?

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

I said, do it then. Help out more.

MARCIA COOK

Look, I help out plenty already.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

But maybe you could do more —

MARCIA COOK

Okay, like, back off?

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Back off?

MARCIA COOK

You know nothing about me, or what I do or don't do! When's the last time you wrote a check or helped an old lady cross the street?

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Um … I'm not sure.

MARCIA COOK

Right. So … "People in glass houses," okay, mister?!

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

People in glass houses what?

MARCIA COOK

You know!

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

I know what?

MARCIA COOK

You've never heard that before?

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Why would anyone wanna live in a glass house? It could break, or people could peep at you —

MARCIA COOK

You know what? I've gotta find my friend Sonia.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Did I say something wrong?

MARCIA COOK

Look, goodbye, thanks for saving me.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Why donchu hang out, have a Yodel?

MARCIA COOK

I'm allergic to chocolate.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Have a soda then.

MARCIA COOK

Caffeine?

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

How 'bout a slice of pizza?

MARCIA COOK

Pizza! Hello? Cheese?! God, did someone throw a brick on *your* head too??!!

*(*MARCIA *exits.)*

**Act 1, Scene 6**

Scene 6: Inez and Norca, Bar and Grill

INEZ

So I toal that nigga, "If the shit can't stay up, then put the damn thing away," okay?

NORCA

You said that shit?!

INEZ

Sister, please. Then he say, "Maybe if you" … and he start makin' this gesture, like he afraid ta say, "Put yo mouth on me," so instead he juss tries ta mime it, like —

NORCA

No he didn't!

INEZ

Oh, yes he did!

NORCA

No-class fool —

INEZ

So I toal the driver ta pull over, and I kicked his ass out the damn cab.

NORCA

Cab?!

INEZ

Ended up I fucked the cabby.

NORCA

You was in a cab??!!

INEZ

Shit, I was fifteen, girl, know what I'm sayin'?

NORCA

You nevah fucked no nigga in a cab!

INEZ

Yes I did! Fine Haitian man — he was sending money home to his mom to buy, like, a new hut or something.

NORCA

"A hut"?

INEZ

Sumpthin' like that — house, hut — you know them Haitians back then —

NORCA

Girl, you crazy.

INEZ

Anyway, you wasn't around. You was — I think you was wit' that Eustace Mejias at the time.

NORCA

Oh, ma Gawd! Little Eustace.

INEZ

That ain't what I heard.

NORCA

Heard?! Girl, stop lyin'.

INEZ

Awright, I had me some Eustace, but that was long after you were finished wit' him.

NORCA

Yeah, well … you know …

INEZ

I think you was datin' that bank robber by then.

NORCA

He wasn't no robber. He was a suspect!

INEZ

Well, I never met the suspect.

NORCA

Dag, Inez, you funny.

INEZ

How you mean?

NORCA

I mean, "you funny" — like how you make your face look when you say shit, like when you said "suspect."

INEZ

My face is my face.

NORCA

See, you doin' it right now!

INEZ

I'm not doin' nuthin'.

NORCA

Yes you are, and it's funny. Dass all. It's a compliment, okay? 'Cuz sometimes I think about funny things you useta say that was funny, or how your face looked like when you was reactin' ta something — like in school — or when we had them sleepovers at your aunt's house — or, like, ya know, all the times we was together — and, I think ta myself, "Damn, that bitch was funny," and I wanna just laugh, and I do laugh, and it's helpful to laugh sometimes — and dass 'cuz of you, so — dass all.

INEZ

Yeah, okay.

NORCA

I ain't tryin' ta say nuthin'.

INEZ

Okay, then.

NORCA

What? You ain't got no compliment for me?

INEZ

Well, Norca, other than "Gee, girl, your fat ass bounced off my kitchen table real nice when you was servin' up your stank pussy to my husband" — other than that, I admit I'm drawing a complete blank.

NORCA

Whatever …

INEZ

That all you got to say?

NORCA

I'm just tryin' ta have a nice conversation.

INEZ

You fucked my husband!

NORCA

You ain't never missed me after all these years?

INEZ

You fucked my husband!

NORCA

I mean, besides that.

INEZ

Norca — you fucked my husband!!!

NORCA

How many times I gotta apologize for that?!

INEZ

How about once?!

NORCA

Awright, shit. I apologize, okay?

INEZ

Okay.

NORCA

Okay, then.

INEZ

Okay.

NORCA

I'm just tryin' ta have a nice conversation.

INEZ

Okay …

*(To* SONIA *)*

Excuse me, Miss, we ain't ruinin' your meal or nuthin', are we?

SONIA

Oh, no. I'm just … Is that ketchup?

NORCA

Does it look like ketchup?

INEZ

*(To* NORCA *)*

Girl, stop it.

*(To* SONIA *)*

Here ya go.

SONIA

I'm sorry, I … I'm from Connecticut.

INEZ

Oh, yeah? You know New Haven?

SONIA

Um … yeah?

INEZ

I got some folks up there. Cousins, nephews, all kinds of relations running 'round up there. Good pizza up there in Connecticut. You know about that, Norca?

NORCA

Stop playin'.

INEZ

I'm not playin'.

*(To* SONIA *)*

Tell her.

SONIA

Um.

INEZ

Tell this bitch y'all got the best pizza up there.

SONIA

It's really very good.

NORCA

Not better than New York.

INEZ

*(To* NORCA *)*

You need to get your ass on the Greyhound, try the shit. I'm tellin' you, remember how pizza useta be?

NORCA

Yeah?

INEZ

Well, that's how it still is up there.

*(To* SONIA *)*

Am I lyin'?

SONIA

Not as far as I can tell.

NORCA

*(To* INEZ *)*

What she know about how pizza useta be over here?

SONIA

Uh, I've had pizza in New York before. Lots of times. We useta come into the city a lot, you know, for the theater or a ball game or like my dad useta take us to the Car Show at the Coliseum on Fifty-ninth —

INEZ

You here for the wake?

SONIA

Yeah.

NORCA

You was a student here?

SONIA

Uh —

NORCA

Hold up, you that bitch, ain't you?! You fuckin' Wendy Elmer, right?!

SONIA

No.

NORCA

I fuckin' hate your ass!

SONIA

I'm not her.

NORCA

Don't lie, bitch! I always thought you was a stuck-up ass-hole. I fuckin' hate you! Get out my face — fuckin' Wendy Elmer bitch!

INEZ

*(To* INEZ *)*

That ain't Wendy Elmer. Wendy Elmer dead.

NORCA

Dead from what?

INEZ

Dead from the bitch is dead. I don't know from what — I ain't the damn coroner. Wendy Elmer died a long time ago.

NORCA

Oh.

INEZ

From a illness, I think.

NORCA

Well, good then!

INEZ

Norca, you need ta chill. What the fuck's your problem?

SONIA

She's prolly juss —

NORCA

I could speak for myself, thank you very much!

SONIA

I'm sorry.

*(Pause)*

NORCA

You eat fish, donchu?

SONIA

Eat fish?

NORCA

You a fish eater.

SONIA

I enjoy fish?

NORCA

You suck on females' titties donchu?!

SONIA

You mean am I a lesbian?

INEZ

*(To* NORCA *)*

She ain't no lesbian, Norca. Damn, girl, I'm about ta put a muzzle and a leash on you, you are venomous like some kinda no-ear pit bull.

*(To* SONIA *)*

She's a little tipsy, tipsy and grieving.

NORCA

I ain't grieving! Sister Rose could lick my ass, all I care.

INEZ

Sister Rose was patient with you, Norca.

NORCA

So what she was patient? I ain't tryin' ta say nuthin' bad about the bitch — ain't tryin' ta disrespect her — I'm here, ain't I? I'm representin' for her memory an' shit. I juss don't wanna talk about that penguin bitch! I wanna talk about more funny stories like how you fucked that Haitian motherfucker saving up to buy his

moms a hut — lighthearted shit, ya know? Funny! Not fuckin' all this …

*(To* SONIA *)*

Who you think you starin' at?!

SONIA

I'm not starin'.

INEZ

She ain't starin'!

NORCA

*(To* INEZ *)*

Don't tell me the bitch ain't starin'!

*(To* SONIA *)*

You better put yo eyeballs back in your head before someone stomp 'em, ya bug-eyed bitch!

INEZ

*(To* SONIA *)*

She been drinkin' a little, ya know?

NORCA

*(To* INEZ *)*

Why you takin' her side?!

INEZ

Norca —

NORCA

Doncha "Norca" me; you takin' her side!! Why you gotta take her side??!! Everywhere I go, someone tryin' ta take the other person's side!! Why can't someone take my damn side for once in a while!! You juss like my mother, my kids, my P˙O˙, my everybody!! Everybody always wanna gang up on me, well, what the fuck did I do, huh?! What the fuck I did so bad that you gotta take the side a some bug-eyed bitch you never met before two minutes ago instead a me who you know practically from fuckin' birth??!!

SONIA

I'm gonna go.

INEZ

No, I'm gonna go.

NORCA

No!!! I'm a go! You ain't gonna abandon me twice!! I abandon you! Y'all fuckin' suck, ya know that?! The two of you! Inez, you look older than the hair on my ass, and — you!! — I know you Wendy Elmer!! You could act like you ain't but — you *are* fuckin' Wendy Elmer and this is for you from fifth-grade Earth Science. C'mere!

*(*NORCA *slaps* SONIA *across her teeth.)*

NORCA

I never copied off you, anyway!!

INEZ

Norca, chill.

NORCA

*(To* SONIA *)*

If you so smart, why the fuck you live in Connecticut for??!!

INEZ

Norca —

NORCA

Connecticut, pizza-eatin', conversation-ruin' fuckin' bitch!!!

*(*NORCA *bursts out the bar in tears.)*

INEZ

Sorry.

SONIA

That's okay, this has happened to me before.

INEZ

It has?

SONIA

Yeah. People always think I'm someone else.

INEZ

And then they slap you upside the head?

SONIA

Well, no, but sometimes I get the feeling that they want to.

*(Pause)*

INEZ

That's … that's strange.

*(*INEZ *exits.)*

SONIA

Yeah … Yeah, it is.

**Act 1, Scene 7**

Scene 7: Rooftop in the Confessional

ROOFTOP

So anyway, Father, 497 interludes, 497 I can think of 497, Father … And that's not including before I was married, and it's also not including those nights I can't remember due to substances, which we better just tack on another 25, 50, 'cuz I figure it's better to err on the side a caution, doncha think, Father? Yeah. And I mean, the other thing? the "Seed Spillin'"? That's, well, started at eight, average, say, one and a half times a day, I just turned forty, that's 32 times 365, uh, zero carry the one, 13, carry one, 730, 5, 9, 10 … 11, 680 plus half a that, say 55 hundred give or take, that's over 17,000 solo ventures! — thass a lot a seed, Father — a lot of "whacky-whacky"! I mean, over 500 counts of adultery, 17

grand in self-flagellation, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife"? I'll be honest, I'm runnin' outta neighbors!

FATHER LUX

I smell marijuana.

ROOFTOP

Yeah … prolly one a them altar boys lighting up, huh?

FATHER LUX

The altar boys are at Bear Mountain today, sir.

ROOFTOP

Bear Mountain?

FATHER LUX

Yes. So —

ROOFTOP

Y'all still doin' that? When I was a altar boy, Father C be takin' us to Bear Mountain every year.

FATHER LUX

Sir —

ROOFTOP

We'd always be like, "Dag, Father C, Bear Mountain *again*"?! "Can't we go to like Great Adventure, Jungle Habitat, change it up a little" —

FATHER LUX

Sir?

ROOFTOP

Yes, Father?

FATHER LUX

The marijuana. I must ask you to extinguish it.

ROOFTOP

Oh … You wouldn't want a hit before I put it out, would ya, Father?

FATHER LUX

I'd just like you to put it out, sir.

ROOFTOP

Right. Sorry, Padre.

FATHER LUX

It's okay.

ROOFTOP

Nah, I'm a bad man, smokin' weed up in here, temptin' one of God's soldiers wit' some sensimilla. You must think I'm some kinda … Ya think there's any hope for me?

FATHER LUX

Listen, we have weekend retreats for those kinds of questions.

ROOFTOP

I'm juss askin' your opinion. Is it not okay to ask?

FATHER LUX

There are people better equipped than me to answer that.

ROOFTOP

Like who?

FATHER LUX

Well, 'God. Ask God.

ROOFTOP

I'm not ready for God.

FATHER LUX

Or a therapist. Or the Jesuits — they're smart. I'm just, well … I hear confessions, okay?

ROOFTOP

Okay … But it's … it's pretty hopeless, right? Right?

FATHER LUX

They say despair is the absence of hope. Are you despairing?

ROOFTOP

I am.

FATHER LUX

You know what despair is?

ROOFTOP

The absence of hope, right?

FATHER LUX

Besides that.

ROOFTOP

Oh.

FATHER LUX

Despair is marked by the termination or the cessation of action. For example: A man is stuck in a well —

ROOFTOP

Stuck in a whale?

FATHER LUX

Not a "whale," a well.

ROOFTOP

What's a "well"?

FATHER LUX

A well! You know, you get water from it?

ROOFTOP

Oh, you talkin' about a "well," like, you go wit your pail to the well?

FATHER LUX

Yes, a "well."

ROOFTOP

I'm sorry, Father, I thought you said "whale."

FATHER LUX

That's okay. So —

ROOFTOP

'Cuz there's a story about a man stuck up in a whale, right?

FATHER LUX

That's Jonah.

ROOFTOP

Who?

FATHER LUX

Jo-nah.

ROOFTOP

Yeah, "Jonah," dass right — "Jonah and the Whale."

FATHER LUX

Yes, so —

ROOFTOP

Sister Rose, she useta tell us that story all the time.

FATHER LUX

It's a nice story —

ROOFTOP

I useta go home and have nightmares 'bout gettin' stuck up inside a whale — my pops useta beat my ass wit' a slipper talkin' 'bout "Ain't no whales in Harlem, fool, go back ta sleep, this is a workin' family!" Yeah …

FATHER LUX

Anyway —

ROOFTOP

Say, you remember them pajamas wit' the feet on 'em? You ever had a pair?

FATHER LUX

No.

ROOFTOP

Dass too bad, they was snug. An I always useta like those little glove clips they would put on your coat, with the long string runnin' through your sleeves, so your gloves was always hangin' there when ya needed them? I mean, I can't tell you how many pairs of nice leather gloves I useta lose every winter — I mean, this is before I moved out to Los Angeles —

FATHER LUX

Sir?

ROOFTOP

I once lost a pair of genuine Mink-lined Italian Leather gloves —

FATHER LUX

Sir?

ROOFTOP

Yes, Father?

FATHER LUX

Confessional! Not "Conversational"! Remember?!

ROOFTOP

Right, right.

FATHER LUX

There may be others waiting.

ROOFTOP

Waiting for what?

FATHER LUX

Waiting.

ROOFTOP

Others?

FATHER LUX

Others. Yes.

ROOFTOP

You tryin' ta get rid of me, Father?

FATHER LUX

No.

ROOFTOP

You got a little egg timer back there or sumpthin'?

FATHER LUX

No egg timer, no.

ROOFTOP

'Cuz maybe you didn't hear me when I said I ain't made a confession for thirty years.

FATHER LUX

I heard you.

ROOFTOP

You have any idea how hard it is to walk into a church after thirty years, Father?

FATHER LUX

The important thing is that you came back.

ROOFTOP

Dass right I came back — and it's not like y'all got the most alluring marketing campaign going on these days either, Father. You feelin' me?

FATHER LUX

I feel you.

ROOFTOP

And, ya know, forgive me, Father, but it ain't like y'all the only game in town anymore either! They got all kinda

new churches, religions, spiritual growth joints where you can do whatever you want, say whatever you want —

FATHER LUX

But you came here.

ROOFTOP

That's exactly my point! I came here. So I would think, that after thirty years in the wind, Father, that if a fallen sheep comes limpin' back into the manger, that the stable master should just turn off the damn meter and let the sheep say what he need to say in the time he need to say it.

FATHER LUX

In other words, you're more important than those others who may be waiting.

ROOFTOP

What?!

FATHER LUX

I said —

ROOFTOP

Oh, see? Dass trickery! Trickery, Father!

FATHER LUX

I don't understand —

ROOFTOP

I came here to feel better, and you tryin' ta send me off feelin' worse!

FATHER LUX

That's not my intention.

ROOFTOP

Them other churches? They don't try ta make a man feel guilty for speakin' his truth. They don't cash their checks off a guilt.

FATHER LUX

You're right.

ROOFTOP

Whaddya mean, "I'm right"?

FATHER LUX

And yet, my question remains: Do you think you're more important than those others who may be waiting?

ROOFTOP

Well, obviously, you think the answer to that question is no!

FATHER LUX

I didn't say that.

ROOFTOP

Well then, what the hell *are* you saying?! I mean, shit — when the Prodigal Son came home, his pops killed the fattest calf and had a mothahfuckin' banquet! And Noah, Father? Noah gathered up *all* the animals two by two — he didn't say, "Nah, fuck them chiba smokin' zebra's, they takin' too long —

FATHER LUX

Sir —

ROOFTOP

The real question here ain't "Do *I* think I'm more important?" The actual fuckin' question is, "Do *you* think I'm important *enough?*"

FATHER LUX

Can you provide me a single, compelling reason why I should?

ROOFTOP

How 'bout 'cuz you're a priest and it's your goddamned job?! Shit, what are you — some kinda rookie?!

FATHER LUX

I've been a priest for forty-six years, sir.

ROOFTOP

Well, whatchu been doin' the past half century — playin' pinochle?! Can't you tell when a man is coming to you afraid?

FATHER LUX

Afraid of what?

ROOFTOP

Goddamnit, Father, I'm afraid a everything! Is that what ya wanna hear? Afraid I'm never gonna be the person

I thought

I'd be, back when I thought I had all the time in the world to get there! I'm afraid to go next door ta pay my respects to ol' Sister Rose 'cuz my goddamn ex-wife Inez, she's prolly right next door over there at the wake! *She* don't like me! *I* don't like me! And I'm afraid that the person I'll like least wherever I go will always be me!! … Okay, mothahfuckah?! You happy?!

*(Beat)*

FATHER LUX

My name is Father Lux.

ROOFTOP

Yeah, so what?

FATHER LUX

I'm sorry.

*(Beat)*

ROOFTOP

Lux, huh? You mean, like —

FATHER LUX

Like the soap, yes.

ROOFTOP

I was gonna say Lux as in the Latin, meaning "light."

FATHER LUX

That's impressive. Most people say the soap.

ROOFTOP

Well, I'm not most people.

FATHER LUX

No disputing that.

ROOFTOP

I'm twelve years Catholic school educated — I know my Latin. *Rident stolidi de verba latina* — ain't that right, Father?

FATHER LUX

Yes. Yes it is … Listen, why don't you tell me what brought you to confession today.

ROOFTOP

You mean, like, specifically?

FATHER LUX

Specifically, yes.

ROOFTOP

Uh …

*(There is a loud insistent knocking on the confessional door.)*

FATHER LUX

*(To* ROOFTOP *)*

Hold on a sec, I'll get rid of him …

*(To the knocker)*

Please wait your turn, I'm in the middle of a confession.

BALTHAZAR

Father: This is the New York City Police Department. I'm afraid I must ask the gentleman in the confessional to step out, hands up, and vacate the booth.

FATHER LUX

*(To* ROOFTOP *)*

This has never happened to me before.

BALTHAZAR

I repeat: Gentleman in confessional, step out — now.

ROOFTOP

I got weed on me, Father, could you help a brother out?

BALTHAZAR

Gentleman in the confessional, I am drawing my weapon —

ROOFTOP

Don't shoot! Don't shoot!

*(*ROOFTOP *exits the confessional.)*

ROOFTOP

Balthazar?!

BALTHAZAR

Rooftop! What's up, my man?!!!

ROOFTOP

Mothahfuckah, what the fuck you think you doin'! You scared hell outta me!?!

BALTHAZAR

Come on, brother, I'm with Flip at the bar? I'll buy you a beer.

ROOFTOP

A beer?! Balthazar — I'm conductin' some serious business in there with the Father — what I want with a damn beer?

BALTHAZAR

Yo, Rooftop, what's the matter, man? Can't you take a little joke?

ROOFTOP

Joke?! I'm holding a bag of weed and a eight-ball of blow on me, brother — cops bangin' down the door on me ain't no joke!

BALTHAZAR

I'm sorry.

ROOFTOP

Jokes like that send mothahfuckahs into intensive care units for fuckin' heart attacks, man!

BALTHAZAR

*(To* ROOFTOP *)*

Look, I saw your limo out front. I got excited. I'm sorry.

*(To priest)*

I'm sorry, Father.

ROOFTOP

You okay, Father?

FATHER LUX

I'm fine.

ROOFTOP

Where your legs at, Father?

FATHER LUX

Korea.

*(Pause)*

BALTHAZAR

I'll, uh, we'll catch up later, right?

ROOFTOP

Hey — someone punch you in yo eye, Balthazar?

BALTHAZAR

Bad day. I'm fine. I'm gonna go. Bye, Roof. Father.

*(*BALTHAZAR *crosses to leave.)*

FATHER LUX

*(Re: the confessional)*

Shall we?

ROOFTOP

Yeah, uh …

*(To* BALTHAZAR *)*

Where you gonna be at? The bar?

BALTHAZAR

Yeah.

ROOFTOP

The bar at the corner?

BALTHAZAR

Yeah.

ROOFTOP

With Flip Johnson, you said?

BALTHAZAR

"Me, Flip, an' a potato chip."

ROOFTOP

Inez ain't down there, is she?

BALTHAZAR

Nah.

ROOFTOP

Y'all havin' a little drink, huh?

FATHER LUX

Uh —

BALTHAZAR

You wanna come?

ROOFTOP

I mean, a little drink is soothin', ain't no one tryin' ta deny that.

*(*PINKY *enters with grocery bag.)*

PINKY VELASQUEZ

Rooftop!!

ROOFTOP

Oh, shit! Wassup, Governor?

BALTHAZAR

Pinky, my man, *que pasa?*

PINKY VELASQUEZ

Hi Rooftop.

ROOFTOP

You doin' okay, Governor?

PINKY VELASQUEZ

Yes.

ROOFTOP

Well, all right!

PINKY VELASQUEZ

I'm going to confession. Then, I'm going to bring these Yodels and milk to Edwin so we can eat them.

BALTHAZAR

Man with a plan.

PINKY VELASQUEZ

Yes. Then, I'm going to find Norca.

ROOFTOP

Well, I won't keep ya then.

*(Proffering a bill)*

Say, Guv, you got change for this fiddy?

PINKY VELASQUEZ

No.

ROOFTOP

*(With a wink)*

Then I guess you gonna haveta hang on to it then.

PINKY VELASQUEZ

Oh. Okay.

ROOFTOP

*(Re: the confessional)*

Go on, handle your business now.

PINKY VELASQUEZ

Yes.

ROOFTOP

*(Turning to exit)*

Nice rappin' with ya, Padre.

FATHER LUX

*(To* ROOFTOP *)*

Sir?

PINKY VELASQUEZ

I'm ready to confess, Father.

FATHER LUX

*(To* ROOFTOP *)*

Sir! Wait!

*(To* PINKY *)*

Ya know what, Pinky? Confession is over.

PINKY VELASQUEZ

But it's not noon, Father.

FATHER LUX

Yeah, but still, it's over.

PINKY VELASQUEZ

But it's not noon.

FATHER LUX

I know it's not noon.

PINKY VELASQUEZ

Thass 'cuz it's not noon.

ROOFTOP

Later, fellas.

*(*ROOFTOP *exits.)*

FATHER LUX

Wait!

PINKY VELASQUEZ

How could it be noon when it's not noon?

FATHER LUX

Sir! —

PINKY VELASQUEZ

If it's not noon, then it's not noon. 'Cuz if it wasn't noon, but it *was* noon, then it'd be noon. But I don't think it's noon, Father.

*(*FATHER LUX *turns back to* PINKY. *)*

FATHER LUX

What?

*(Beat)*

PINKY VELASQUEZ

I brought you some mixed nuts.

FATHER LUX

Oh … thanks.

PINKY VELASQUEZ

Yes. Planter's.

FATHER LUX

Great.

*(*PINKY *pecks* FATHER LUX' *s cheek.)*

FATHER LUX

Don't do that, Pinky!

PINKY VELASQUEZ

You looked sad.

FATHER LUX

Don't do that ever.

PINKY VELASQUEZ

Oh … Why?

FATHER LUX

Why? … Just don't do it!

*(Beat)*

*(*PINKY *pauses, hoping for a reaction from* FATHER LUX, *doesn't get one. Hands* FATHER LUX *the peanuts, exits.)*

*(Blackout)*

**Act 2**

**Act 2, Scene 1**

ACT II: NIGHT: Scene 1: Bar and Grill, 10 p˙m˙

ROOFTOP

Man, you can't juss sneak me in there for a minute, Balthazar? Flash your badge? Lemme take care of my business, pay my respects?

BALTHAZAR

Pay your respects to who? There's nothing in there but an empty casket.

ROOFTOP

But there's, like, a photo of her in there, right?

BALTHAZAR

They stole it.

ROOFTOP

Stole the photo? Well, how 'bout a mass card then? Sumpthin'. 'Cuz I'm tryin' ta catch the midnight flight out of La Guardia, brother.

BALTHAZAR

You're not staying for the funeral?

ROOFTOP

Nah, man — got my radio joint, six a˙m˙ Prime-time drive time.

BALTHAZAR

I thought we were gonna hang.

ROOFTOP

Balthazar, when we strolled up in this joint, it was day — it ain't day no more. That tells me we been hangin'. Right?

BALTHAZAR

I guess … *Salut.*

ROOFTOP

Yeah. *Salut,* brother. *Salut,* Flip.

*(They drink. Beat.)*

ROOFTOP

So, I can't, like, go in there for a second, touch the casket, do a little kneel-down for a second?

BALTHAZAR

Bro', a crime has been committed. Evidence is being collected. When that's all done, *and if Sister Rose's body is found,* we'll open up the room.

ROOFTOP

And when's that gonna be?

BALTHAZAR

It's gonna be when it's gonna be. Shit.

ROOFTOP

But the room's gonna open?

BALTHAZAR

What kinda question is that?! How am I supposed to know the answer to that question?!

ROOFTOP

I'm juss inquiring!

BALTHAZAR

Look, Rooftop, they're keeping the waiting room open for us all night — so if you wanna go to the waiting room, pay your respects to a lamp and a box of Kleenex, and just jet on outta here, then be my fucking guest, okay?

ROOFTOP

You don't have to get all cantankerous, B˙

BALTHAZAR

I just thought you were gonna be here for a while, ya know? I got Mets tickets, I fixed up my extra room, I bought sheets —

ROOFTOP

Why don't you come back to L˙A˙ with me then? Yeah! … B, I got a little spot in the Hills, Jacuzzi. I'm goin' to a barbecue tomorrow night at Barry White's crib, man — Barry White — and believe me, when Barry hosts a get-together, the brother throws down! You could come too, Flip — if ya want.

BALTHAZAR

I can't.

ROOFTOP

Well, you should think on it. You been talkin' 'bout comin' out for a visit for years now. Lotta private security work out in L˙A˙, man. Lotta rich mothahfuckahs who'd pay good money for a New York City detective to oversee their protection. You'd be clockin' ducats to get a suntan, man! You got a girlfriend, B?

BALTHAZAR

Nah.

ROOFTOP

How 'bout you, Flip?

FLIP

I'm married.

ROOFTOP

*(To* FLIP *)*

God bless ya.

*(To* BALTHAZAR *)*

All I'm sayin': you divorced, you been a cop since you graduated high school, and — if I can speak frankly — you look about eighty-five years old, brother. The last jammy my man Barry threw — women outnumbered men ten to one, B, and thass all I'm gonna say about that!

BALTHAZAR

I'm goin' to the funeral — and you should too.

ROOFTOP

Would if I could —

BALTHAZAR

It's fuckin' Sister Rose, man.

ROOFTOP

I'm done with funerals! Don't mind a wake, but fuck a funeral, man. Buried my pops, my little brother. My godson — I was there for you on that, Balthazar. Right? Up on that hill, away from the crowd?

BALTHAZAR

Yeah.

ROOFTOP

All them crazy Dominicans on your ex-wife's side tryin' ta blame you, tryin' ta tear your ass in two? That one mothahfuckah wit' the stiletto? And your moms? … Shit, they shouldn't make no kid-size caskets, oughta juss be one size fits all.

BALTHAZAR

Anyway.

*(Beat.* ROOFTOP *drinks.)*

ROOFTOP

Damn, this is some lousy-ass cognac — they ain't got no Henny up in here?

FLIP

Sold out.

ROOFTOP

This is some ridiculousness right here! The whole thing. Fuckin' cognac, fuckin' wake. Shit.

BALTHAZAR

*Salut!*

ROOFTOP

*Salut.*

*(They drink. Silence.)*

FLIP

I was, I was thinkin' 'bout your brother's funeral before, Rooftop.

ROOFTOP

Lil' Chrissy.

BALTHAZAR

Chrissy was a good kid.

ROOFTOP

He was a dumb-ass kid is what he was! I mean, I know you was tight with him, Flip, but shit — how many kids fell down elevator shafts that summer — like, six?! Every other day on the Eyewitness News, Bill Buetel talkin' 'bout "another

young boy falls to his death today" — wasn't like the word wasn't out! *Stay away from the fuckin' elevator*!! But, nah, Chrissy always had to be nosy, adventurous —
BALTHAZAR

We were the same —

ROOFTOP

Balthazar, did *you* fall down an elevator shaft that summer?! Did Flip? Did I? Did any of Chrissy and Flip's crew? Chrissy didn't have no sense, and subsequently, he didn't have no eleventh birthday party neither!

FLIP

I juss … I juss remember after the funeral, still being in my little suit, and walking over to that spot in the projects where me and Chrissy always used ta be at — and you two were there.

BALTHAZAR

*(To* ROOFTOP *)*

Drinkin' on some pink champale, remember?

FLIP

I remember seeing you, Rooftop, and you lookin' at me real hard — I thought you was gonna maybe hit me or chase me away — but then you just handed me the bottle and said, "Sip on this for Chrissy." And I … I had never tasted liquor before, but I started to put the bottle to my lips anyway, and then you were like, "Got to spill a little on the ground first, kid." So I did, but I felt nervous because I had fucked up and I spilt a little bit of it on my pants and shoes. But then, I took my sip, and I passed the bottle over to you, Balthazar, and then, I looked over at you, Rooftop, and you, you came over to me and just gave me this hug, and I juss remember it felt real good, especially at that moment, 'cuz it was like you didn't hesitate, and … and it just felt good, ya know?

ROOFTOP

Yeah. I know.

FLIP

I listen to you on the radio sometimes.

ROOFTOP

Ya do?

FLIP

You come on some satellite, computer thing that's hooked into my cable TV.

ROOFTOP

Where you live at?

FLIP

Wisconsin.

ROOFTOP

'Cuz you know, they talkin' about takin' the show national.

BALTHAZAR

For real?

ROOFTOP

Yeah, brother. See, right now, we number three behind Steve Harvey and Large in Charge.

BALTHAZAR

Who's Large in Charge?

ROOFTOP

Some fat mothahfuckah thinks he's somebody 'cuz he's a fat mothahfuckah — but he ain't got no game. All's he got is billboards. It's all about the billboards out there.

BALTHAZAR

You got a billboard?

ROOFTOP

Yeah. You wanna see a photo?

*(*ROOFTOP *goes into his wallet.)*

BALTHAZAR

Oh, shit — look who's here.

ROOFTOP

*(reflexively)*

Inez?!

BALTHAZAR

Look.

*(*FATHER LUX *wheels toward the table.)*

ROOFTOP

Aw, man, now what's all this about?

FATHER LUX

*(To* FLIP *and* BALTHAZAR *)*

Hello …

*(To* ROOFTOP *)*

Didn't recognize you with the hat and glasses.

ROOFTOP

Tryin' ta keep it on the D˙L˙, know what I'm sayin'?

FATHER LUX

Ah. You're hiding.

ROOFTOP

Not "hiding," juss not advertising.

FATHER LUX

Hiding.

ROOFTOP

You a funny cat, you know that?

FATHER LUX

If you're not hiding, take off the hat and glasses.

ROOFTOP

I am a grown man, Father — I believe I can attire myself as I please.

BALTHAZAR

You wanna drink, Father?

FATHER LUX

I want a dry Manhattan desperately — I plan to have three once I'm finished here.

ROOFTOP

Finished? Finished what?

FATHER LUX

Look you — Take off your hat and glasses.

ROOFTOP

Now, Father, you a father, and a war veteran, cut off at the knees and all, and you ain't a bad guy, but —

FATHER LUX

Take off your hat and glasses or I'll turn around and leave right now.

ROOFTOP

Yeah, well, forgive me, Father, but that ain't much of a terrifying threat.

FATHER LUX

It's not?

*(Beat.* ROOFTOP *takes off his shit.)*

ROOFTOP

You an annoying mothahfuckah, and I don't feel no guilt saying it.

FATHER LUX

Look at me.

ROOFTOP

What?

*(*FATHER LUX *extends his hands.)*

FATHER LUX

I want you to pray with me. Will you pray with me?

ROOFTOP

Pray?! Goddamnit, Father — this is a bar — ain't no tabernacle!

FATHER LUX

You don't think God is here now?

ROOFTOP

I don't know.

FATHER LUX

God spends a lot more time here than he does next door.

ROOFTOP

Yeah, well, that explains a lot!

FATHER LUX

Take my hands now. Pray with me.

ROOFTOP

C'mon, man! I'm here with my peeps, took the damn red-eye, no sleep —

FATHER LUX

Say the Lord's Prayer with me. Would you do that?

ROOFTOP

For what?

FATHER LUX

Would you say the Lord's Prayer with me? Then I'll go.

*(Beat.* ROOFTOP *takes* FATHER LUX' *s hands.)*

ROOFTOP

You a pest, Lux. Fuckin' pesty.

FATHER LUX

Okay … Ready?

ROOFTOP

How's that go again?

FATHER LUX

"Our father — "

ROOFTOP

Right, yeah, of course.

FATHER LUX

*(To* BALTHAZAR *)*

Care to join?

BALTHAZAR

Sorry, Father — I don't do that no more.

FATHER LUX

*(To* FLIP *)*

How about you?

FLIP

You don't mind?

FATHER LUX

Come on, son. Okay … Let's speak it silently, but together, and with care.

ROOFTOP

Right. Let's roll.

*(They pray the Lord's Prayer silently.* BALTHAZAR *takes this all in. A beat.)*

*(*ROOFTOP *and* FATHER LUX *regard each other.)*

FATHER LUX

I saw your ex-wife.

ROOFTOP

Inez?!

FATHER LUX

I mean, that's what this is all about, isn't it?

ROOFTOP

Where'd you see Inez at?

FATHER LUX

Is Inez what this is all about?

ROOFTOP

You didn't speak to her, did you?!

FATHER LUX

No.

ROOFTOP

Don't lie.

FATHER LUX

What made you decide to come to confession today?

ROOFTOP

Hold up! What was she doin' when ya saw her?

FATHER LUX

Talking on her cell phone.

ROOFTOP

And how'd you know it was her?

FATHER LUX

Because it was her.

ROOFTOP

She had on that dark red dress?

FATHER LUX

Ah. You saw her too.

ROOFTOP

So?!

FATHER LUX

So, did you see her before or after you were suddenly overcome — after thirty years — with the desire for spiritual absolution?

ROOFTOP

Now dass … dass private!

BALTHAZAR

Take a walk, Flip?

FLIP

Sure.

*(*BALTHAZAR *and* FLIP *begin rising.)*

FATHER LUX

No. Stay …

*(To* ROOFTOP *)*

I will not leave without an answer.

ROOFTOP

Nah, man. Nah.

*(Beat)*

FATHER LUX

I'm not a good priest. I don't visit the sick because I'm afraid to go outside in my vestments. They don't let me say Mass anymore. I haven't left the rectory next door since I was transferred here nine months ago. And I don't want to. Black people scare me. I don't particularly like them. Or you, really. Most of the time, I don't believe in God at all, and when I do, I'm furious at Him … That's as honest as I can be.

*(Beat)*

ROOFTOP

I seen her before I came to see ya. She didn't see me, but I saw her. After she turned the corner, I opened up the car door and I vomited everything I had inside me onto the sidewalk — and I mean everything. My kidneys were flappin'

against my ribs. My heart was pullin' against my chest. I tried to keep blowin' till my soul came up — just ta see if I still had one, but nothing came up, Father — nothin'. Just air …

FATHER LUX

I can fix that.

ROOFTOP

C'mon man, you a old, racist, tired, mothahfuckin' pegleg mothahfuckah, you can't fix nothing.

FATHER LUX

If you really believed that, you wouldn't be sitting here. And you wouldn't have walked into my confessional this morning.

ROOFTOP

But Father …

FATHER LUX

Tell me everything you've ever done in your entire life that you feel killed your soul.

ROOFTOP

But that'll take days!

FATHER LUX

I don't have a problem with that. Do you?

**Act 2, Scene 2**

Scene 2: The Bar and Grill, 2 a˙m˙

*(*MARCIA *sits alone at a table.* GAIL, *also alone, is vaguely visible at the bar. Quiet.* EDWIN *storms in upset, sees* MARCIA, *looks for a seat as far from her as possible.)*

MARCIA COOK

Is there something going on out there I should know about?

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

What?!

MARCIA COOK

I said: Is there something going on out there that I should know about?

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

That you should know about? No.

MARCIA COOK

But there's something going on out there?

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

What?!

MARCIA COOK

I said: But there's something going on out there?

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Going on out where?

MARCIA COOK

Out there! Is there something going on out there?!

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

What are you yellin' about?! No! There is nothing going on out there!

MARCIA COOK

I'm sorry, okay? It's just, the way you barged in, I thought, maybe —

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Well, you thought incorrect, okay?!

MARCIA COOK

Yeah, screw you too.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Excuse me?!

MARCIA COOK

I said: Blow it out your ass and dry up! Oaf!

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Look! The best thing you could do right now would be to refrain your ass!

MARCIA COOK

Refrain my *ass?!* Refrain my ass from what?!

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Juss shut it off, okay?! Shut it up and shut it off!

MARCIA COOK

Jackass.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Ya know — there's a word for you!

MARCIA COOK

There's lots of words for you — why don't you go buy a children's book and learn some?!

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

You know what —

*(*PINKY *enters.)*

PINKY VELASQUEZ

Hi, Edwin!

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Pinky! Jesus Christ, where in the hell you been at, Pinky?! Huh?! … No! No, do not come closer! Do not come closer, Pinky, 'cuz I'm liable to take off my belt right here in this bar!

PINKY VELASQUEZ

Why?

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Where the fuck you been?!

PINKY VELASQUEZ

Out?

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

What time I sent you out for Yodels, Pinky?

PINKY VELASQUEZ

Um … before noon?

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Goddamn right it was before noon! Ten-thirty in the morning! Ten-thirty in the morning I sent you out for Yodels and milk. What time is it now?

PINKY VELASQUEZ

Late?

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Pinky!

PINKY VELASQUEZ

Very late?

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Two in the morning, Pinky! It's two in the fuckin' morning!

PINKY VELASQUEZ

I'm sorry —

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Fuck you "I'm sorry" — where's the bodega from here?

PINKY VELASQUEZ

Up the block.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

So then how in the fuck did it take you almost sixteen hours to walk up the fuckin' block?! Answer me!

PINKY VELASQUEZ

I'm sorry.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

I called the police! The fire department! The fuckin' neighbors!

*(*PINKY *tries to hand* EDWIN *a smushed Yodel.)*

PINKY VELASQUEZ

I … I saved you a Yodel!

*(*EDWIN *slaps it out of his hand violently.)*

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Where you been at? Answer me!

PINKY VELASQUEZ

That hurt, Edwin.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

I'm gonna call up Social Services, Pinky!

PINKY VELASQUEZ

No!

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Yes I am!

PINKY VELASQUEZ

I was with Norca, okay?!

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Stop lying!

PINKY VELASQUEZ

I'm not lying, I was with Norca!

*(*EDWIN *takes out his cell phone.)*

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

I'm dialing the number, Pinky!

PINKY VELASQUEZ

I was with Norca, I swear! I saw her by the corner and I said, "Hi Norca," and she said, "Fuck off, Retardo"

*(*like how she calls me *),*

but then I gave her some Yodels, and the milk, and the change, and I told her about my disability check, and we cashed it at the pharmacy, and we went to her friend to buy marijuana, and we went to a bar, and she smoked marijuana and drank margaritas, and I smoked three cigarettes and ate a cheeseburger and drank a lot of Sprite, and nobody looked at me funny, and we talked, and that's truth, Edwin, I swear!!

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

That fucking bitch!

PINKY VELASQUEZ

You're not gonna call Social Services, are you?

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Pinky, this story? It's a true one?

PINKY VELASQUEZ

It's true, Edwin. It's the best time I ever had in my life!

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Best time you ever had?! That miserable bitch! Let Norca take care of your ass 24-7-365, see how many best times you have then!

PINKY VELASQUEZ

I know.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

No, you don't know — you don't know shit.

PINKY VELASQUEZ

We talked so much, Edwin. You wouldn't believe what we talked about. She said I was her best friend! She said I was the smartest person she ever met!

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Yeah — you so smart you let that fuckin' bitch call you a retard, steal your money, and cash your fuckin' check. Real smart, Pinky.

PINKY VELASQUEZ

Can I have a hug, Edwin?

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Did I tell you stay away from Norca?

PINKY VELASQUEZ

You toal me Norca didn't like me, but you were wrong.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

I was wrong?!

PINKY VELASQUEZ

I'm sorry —

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

No, Pinky, you said it, live with it.

PINKY VELASQUEZ

I didn't mean it.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Go home, Pinky!

PINKY VELASQUEZ

But I wanna stay with you!

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Well, I don't wanna stay with you! How's that? How's that, Pinky?! Don't you understand that I have to know where you are? That every minute of every day I have to be able to know that you're not dead somewhere?! But I guess I'm "wrong" about that too! "Wrong" about a lot of things!

PINKY VELASQUEZ

No.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Guess I was wrong going to court to keep you after Mom died, wrong to stay in this neighborhood where you feel familiar, wrong to tell Social Services to go fuck themselves, guess I was wrong every toy, every game, every movie, every dinner, every weekend, every night a my whole fuckin' life!

PINKY VELASQUEZ

No.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

And that today, Pinky, out of all the fuckin' days in the year — with everything going on here — that you got to pick today to spazz out and terrify me and let me down when I needed you — for once — to be a little less a retard and a little more a fuckin' man — I will never forgive you for that … Never … Yeah, dass right, cry! You gave me six heart attacks today — you should cry! Now go the fuck home, you little fuckin' baby — and pack your fuckin' bags! Go!

*(*PINKY *exits. Beat.* EDWIN *takes out his cell.)*

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Mrs˙ McNulty? Mrs˙ McNulty, this is Edwin the Super, sorry to call so late … No, I'm fine. Pinky, he's comin' up the block now, could you wait for him by the lamp post? Yeah. Yeah, thanks. Nah, let him watch TV, whatever he wants. Thanks. You too, dear.

*(*EDWIN *hangs up, finds a seat, his head collapsing into his arms. He heaves. Silence.)*

*(*MARCIA *looks at* EDWIN. *Silence.)*

*(*MARCIA *finds tissues in her purse, crosses to* EDWIN, *leaves tissues on table, goes back to her seat. Silence.)*

*(*MARCIA *considers, then picks up her food, drink, silverware, napkin, and purse, crosses to* EDWIN' *s table. Sits. Silence.)*

MARCIA COOK

My grandfather was an alcoholic … He used to beat up my grandmother, and my mom, and Sister Rose … When Sister Rose was eleven, she stood up to my grandfather, and after that, he would only beat her. The result of this is that my mom and Sister Rose both grew up to become different kinds of maniacs. They were both alcoholics … They're both dead … And I'm just like both of them … And I think maybe you are too.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

I, uh … You gonna eat that?

MARCIA COOK

Uh, no.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Mind if I do?

MARCIA COOK

Please.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

I always get hungry … when I have a lot of feelings.

MARCIA COOK

I understand.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

I personally don't think I'm a maniac, and — lemme finish — I think that although you're a little … unique … I don't think you're that either.

MARCIA COOK

Not yet, but maybe soon.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

And I don't think Sister Rose was a maniac neither.

MARCIA COOK

Well, that's where you're wrong.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Lemme tell you something: You know who taught me how ta ride a bike? Sister Rose. You know who told me I was handsome all the time till I started believin' it? Sister Rose. Who helped my brother Pinky learn stuff every day after school so he wouldn't get sent to a special school someplace else? Sister Rose.

MARCIA COOK

But that's —

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Hold up. Yes, she could be wild, mean sometimes, she had a big stick and she knew howta use it, believe me, but ask any kid who grew up 'round a hundred twenty-first, and if they're being honest? They'll tell ya something special she done for

them … 'cuz thass who she was … and thass why so many people are turnin' up outta the woodwork, 'cuz in their heart? — they know … They know she was … that she was … Our Lady, ya know?
MARCIA COOK

I wish my mom could hear you talking about her sister like that.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Yeah, well, I wish a lot a things too.

MARCIA COOK

Like what?

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

I dunno.

MARCIA COOK

What?

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Nothing. Just…

MARCIA COOK

What?

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

You're very pretty, Marcia. I just think you're so … pretty …

MARCIA COOK

…

GAIL SAUNDERS

Sorry to bother you, but … Question: Do I seem gay to you?

MARCIA COOK

"Seem"?

GAIL SAUNDERS

Okay … Do I seem *very* gay?

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

No, I wouldn't say that you seemed "very" gay.

MARCIA COOK

Edwin, be honest.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

You seem "quite" gay.

MARCIA COOK

Just "quite"?

GAIL SAUNDERS

*(To* MARCIA *)*

So, you're saying what? I seem "very quite" gay?

MARCIA COOK

Well, I would have to say, I mean, if you really wanna know, that you appear to be *exceedingly* gay.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

No, I disagree.

MARCIA COOK

Edwin, the man is gay!

GAIL SAUNDERS

But if I was dressed differently —

MARCIA COOK

Still gay.

GAIL SAUNDERS

If I had a complete makeover —

MARCIA COOK

Completely made-over gay.

GAIL SAUNDERS

So you're saying, even if I change everything about me, and I mean everything —

MARCIA COOK

Well, I'd have to see it first, but …

GAIL SAUNDERS

Thank you for your honesty.

*(*GAIL *goes back to his drink.)*

MARCIA COOK

Would you ever consider shaving your moustache?

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

My moustache? I don't think so.

MARCIA COOK

That's okay. Would you like to have dinner with me tomorrow … or breakfast?

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

I can't.

MARCIA COOK

Why not?

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Funeral.

MARCIA COOK

I mean after the funeral.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

I got stuff.

MARCIA COOK

Well, how 'bout the next day?

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Workin'.

MARCIA COOK

Call in sick.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Don't you take no for an answer?

MARCIA COOK

Why should I?

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

C'mon. You saw.

MARCIA COOK

Saw what?

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

My brother.

MARCIA COOK

So?!

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

So, you wanna love me? Decide to love me right now? Marry me tomorrow? Move in with me and my brother? Love him too? Stay here in this neighborhood for as long as it takes? You wanna do that, I'll give it a shot.

MARCIA COOK

That is so unfair.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Welcome to my life that ain't gonna change.

*(*EDWIN *goes to exit.)*

MARCIA COOK

Martyr!

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

My brother needs me!

MARCIA COOK

You need your brother! God, haven't you ever heard of therapy?!

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

I choose loyalty!

MARCIA COOK

Yeah, well what good does that do me?!

*(Beat)*

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Look, Marcia, it's just better this way.

*(*EDWIN *exits. Silence.)*

GAIL SAUNDERS

"When I became a man, I put away childish things."

MARCIA COOK

What?

GAIL SAUNDERS

He should read Corinthians.

MARCIA COOK

What?

GAIL SAUNDERS

"When I became a man, I put away childish things" — Saint Paul.

MARCIA COOK

Fuck off!

*(A long beat.* FLIP *enters, drunk, but steady, approaches* GAIL, *face-to-face.)*

*(Beat)*

GAIL SAUNDERS

What?

*(*FLIP *kisses* GAIL. *)*

GAIL SAUNDERS

You kissed me.

*(*FLIP *kisses* GAIL *again.)*

GAIL SAUNDERS

That's twice. You kissed me twice. In relative public, Robert.

FLIP

Damn straight.

GAIL SAUNDERS

*(Re:* MARCIA *)*

Right in front of that woman.

FLIP

Dass right. Can we go back to the hotel now?

*(Beat)*

GAIL SAUNDERS

Do you know her?

FLIP

Who?

GAIL SAUNDERS

That woman over there. Do you know her?

FLIP

Do I know her? Yeah. Yeah, I know her. Her name's Katie.

GAIL SAUNDERS

Katie?

FLIP

Yeah. Katie Ryan. We were in the fifth grade together. Let's go.

GAIL SAUNDERS

Katie Ryan?

FLIP

What?

GAIL SAUNDERS

"Katie Ryan," Robert?!

*(Beat)*

FLIP

Don't ruin it, Gail.

GAIL SAUNDERS

You don't really think I'm a bad actor, do you, Robert?

FLIP

You're … my star.

GAIL SAUNDERS

I'll send for my things.

*(*GAIL *goes to exit.)*

FLIP

"Send for your things"? —

GAIL SAUNDERS

I'm thirty-seven years old, Robert … Thirty-seven. And so are you.

FLIP

Gail?

GAIL SAUNDERS

Thirty-seven.

*(*GAIL *exits.)*

**Act 2, Scene 3**

Scene 3: Main viewing room, 5 a˙m˙

*(*VIC *is asleep.* EDWIN *is asleep.* ROOFTOP *sits between them.* SONIA *sits alone.* INEZ *reads her Bible.)*

ROOFTOP

Nezzie?

INEZ

Hello, Walter.

ROOFTOP

Didn't see you come in.

INEZ

You was sleepin'.

ROOFTOP

What time is it, Nezzie?

INEZ

Dass not a watch on your wrist?

ROOFTOP

Right. Yeah … Damn, five a˙m˙ I gotta make a call. Gotta call in sick on my show this morning. You ever heard my show?

INEZ

Pay phone's just around the corner.

ROOFTOP

Anything happen while —

INEZ

No.

ROOFTOP

Well, "no news is good news," right?

INEZ

What?

ROOFTOP

Well, I guess not in this case, huh? Reading your Bible, I see.

INEZ

Trying to.

ROOFTOP

"Into the valley of the dead rode the six hundred"!

INEZ

Thass not the Bible, Walter.

ROOFTOP

Oh … Say, I been to the church today.

INEZ

Yeah?

ROOFTOP

Went to confession.

INEZ

That musta took a while.

ROOFTOP

You have no idea. Father Lux, know him?

INEZ

I don't attend this parish anymore.

ROOFTOP

He the priest in the wheelchair.

INEZ

Oh him. Poor man. I saw him on the street, didn't see his collar — almost handed him a dollar.

ROOFTOP

Yeah, he ain't dapper like Father C was, but, he all right.

INEZ

Well, it sounds like it went well.

ROOFTOP

It did … Say, Nezzie, you wanna take a little walk with me, maybe juss up to Cherry Park?

INEZ

No.

ROOFTOP

Why not?

INEZ

I don't think my husband would appreciate it for one thing.

ROOFTOP

Well how 'bout you, Nezzie — would you appreciate it?

INEZ

Look, my life is good, Walter. Got a good job, good husband, good life. I go to events, I do things, see things, I take a vacation every year — Hawaii. Trinidad. Wherevah I wanna go.

ROOFTOP

Where your husband at?

INEZ

He at home, Walter. You've heard of home, right? It's that place husbands hang out at sometimes?

*(*GAIL *enters with suitcase and newspaper.* ROOFTOP *and* INEZ *glare at each other.)*

GAIL SAUNDERS

Is this seat available?

SONIA

Oh. Yes. Sure.

GAIL SAUNDERS

Thank you.

*(To* INEZ *)*

Hello.

INEZ

Goliath, right?

GAIL SAUNDERS

Actually, it's Gail. Gail Saunders.

INEZ

Okay.

GAIL SAUNDERS

How are you?

INEZ

Hanging in.

GAIL SAUNDERS

*(To* INEZ *)*

I quit drinking today. Today is day one.

INEZ

Well, congratulations.

GAIL SAUNDERS

I'm not an alcoholic, but sometimes I drink all day and into the night.

*(To* ROOFTOP *)*

I'm Gail. Gail Saunders.

ROOFTOP

I seen you at the bar I think.

GAIL SAUNDERS

You're "Up on the roof with Rooftop," right?

ROOFTOP

Yes. Yes I am.

GAIL SAUNDERS

I'm a fan of your show. I'm a listener.

ROOFTOP

Thank you.

GAIL SAUNDERS

How are you?

ROOFTOP

I'm fine, how are you?

GAIL SAUNDERS

Gay. I'm gay.

ROOFTOP

That right?

SONIA

My cousin's gay.

GAIL SAUNDERS

Is he available? — just kidding.

*(To* ROOFTOP *)*

Anyway, I'm homosexual.

ROOFTOP

Well, glad ta know ya.

GAIL SAUNDERS

And I'm an actor.

ROOFTOP

All right.

GAIL SAUNDERS

See? I bought *Back Stage* — it's a publication that lists auditions.

ROOFTOP

Okay.

GAIL SAUNDERS

Auditions for actors: gay and straight.

ROOFTOP

Right.

GAIL SAUNDERS

Me, of course, being gay.

ROOFTOP

Okay, now, is there something about me that suggests to you that all this might be of some kinda particular interest to me?

INEZ

Walter.

ROOFTOP

There's a room full of people here — why he gotta be directing all his little facts at me, Nezzie?

INEZ

Quit callin' me "Nezzie" — like you on some kinda intimate terms!

ROOFTOP

I am on intimate terms!

INEZ

No you're not! You're on "Fuck you" terms, Walter — so go slink off in your fuckin' limo back to La-La land, or wherever it is you con people into payin' you good money for nonsense, and leave me out of it!

ROOFTOP

You tryin' ta tell me you can't pretend to read a Bible someplace else?!

INEZ

What?!

ROOFTOP

You heard me! It's five a˙m˙ in the morning, you got a so-called husband at home, and there ain't gonna be no goddamned wake, so why in hell you still here, Nezzie Thompson?!

INEZ

You better get out of here, Walter!

ROOFTOP

Nezzie —

INEZ

No way — Fuck you! You think 'cuz you went to a church and hustled some bummy old priest that it gives you the right

to come to me any way you want?! You killed my heart, Walter! Killed it! You don't remember Sister Rose talkin' 'bout "every woman has a secret garden"? Well, you took my secret garden and dropped a fuckin' atomic bomb on it and now it's just scorched earth and ashes — burnt up dirt.
ROOFTOP

You talkin' fifteen years now!

INEZ

Fifteen years, five hundred years!! That's who I am! You knew that from jump! You knew it! Did ya not know it, Walter? Look me in my eye and say you didn't an' I'll give you the Academy Award for Best Stone Cold Liar of the fuckin' millennium! You think *I'm* upset?! You should meet my husband — the damn fool fell in love with a woman got a bombed-out graveyard for a mothahfuckin' heart! And he's a good man, Walter — good and decent and loyal and nuthin' like you, so … okay?! And I'm doin' it to him like you did it to me, so can you just get up off me now?!

*(*ROOFTOP *rises.)*

ROOFTOP

Fine! I'll respect your wishes!

INEZ

You don't know a damn thing about "respect."

ROOFTOP

I need to make my phone call anyway!

INEZ

Yeah, be sure to call someone who gives a shit.

*(*ROOFTOP *crosses to exit.)*

ROOFTOP

*(To* GAIL *)*

You caused this!

GAIL SAUNDERS

I'm very sorry.

ROOFTOP

You wanna tell somebody you gay, tell Oprah, mothahfuckah!!

*(*ROOFTOP *exits.)*

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

*(Waking up)*

What time is it?

SONIA

Five.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

In the morning?

SONIA

Yeah.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

*(To* INEZ *)*

They find Sister Rose?

INEZ

No.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

No one heard from Balthazar?

INEZ

No.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Sumpthin' happen, Inez?

INEZ

Go back to sleep, baby.

GAIL SAUNDERS

*(To* EDWIN *)*

Hi.

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Oh yeah. Hi.

GAIL SAUNDERS

I heard you mention in the bar that you were a super? I'm wondering: any apartments available?

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Not at this time.

GAIL SAUNDERS

Do you know where I can get an apartment for four hundred dollars a month?

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

I dunno — Delaware?

GAIL SAUNDERS

New York's expensive, huh?

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

Try Queens.

GAIL SAUNDERS

They film *Law and Order* here in New York, don't they?

EDWIN VELASQUEZ

I don't know that information … Inez, could you wake me if something happens?

INEZ

Yeah, Eddy.

*(*EDWIN *goes back to sleep.)*

GAIL SAUNDERS

*(To* SONIA *)*

I'm planning to try out for *Law and Order.*

SONIA

You're an actor?

GAIL SAUNDERS

I am.

SONIA

My cousin's an actor.

GAIL SAUNDERS

The gay one?

SONIA

No. It's a different cousin. But he's an actor.

GAIL SAUNDERS

Small world.

SONIA

He was on *Law and Order.*

GAIL SAUNDERS

Really?

SONIA

Well, his back was — but you could definitely tell it was him — I mean, if you knew him.

GAIL SAUNDERS

Oh.

SONIA

He had a line. He pointed to a pot of coffee and said, "There."

INEZ

*(To* SONIA *)*

Excuse me, but why are you here? Do you know somebody here? Did ya go to school here? What?

SONIA

My friend Marcia — she was Sister Rose's niece.

INEZ

An where's this Marcia at?

SONIA

She left.

INEZ

And you're still here because?

SONIA

I guess I'll go then.

*(As* SONIA *goes to exit,* ROOFTOP *reemerges in the doorway.)*

ROOFTOP

I'm a make this call 'cuz I have to, but I need you to think on this till I get back: Ain't my fault about your husband, dass on you. And it ain't my fault 'bout your scorchedup heart — you married me juss like I married you. And I got no choice but to try and forgive myself for everything I done to you, 'cuz, what's the fuckin' alternative, Inez? I useta think there was some other option, some way 'round it, but there really ain't. I can try an' forgive myself, or I can go jump off the GW — and thass it! I feel guilty 'bout a girl been dead fifteen years, and you? You angry at a boy — a boy, Inez — not me … Do I wish I had done it different back then? Hell yeah. Even now, I'm tempted to take this conversation in another

direction juss so I could get with you. And I could get with you if I worked my game right, don't tell me I couldn't 'cuz I'm a fuckin' professional — but what would be the point a that? I lost you — dass my cross. 'Cuz you was my royal. And I killed it. But if you wanna walk around all these years later still tryin' ta play dead, dass your waste, not mine … dass on you. I'm a make my call now.

*(*ROOFTOP *exits. Pause.)*

GAIL SAUNDERS

I know I don't know you, but I would just like to say —

INEZ

Would you put me in a cab, please?

GAIL SAUNDERS

Yes. I'll leave with you.

*(*GAIL *gathers his things, escorts* INEZ *out.)*

SONIA

Bye.

*(*SONIA *sits alone with the sleeping men. Pause.* BALTHAZAR *enters, disheveled, holding a brown paper bag.)*

BALTHAZAR

*(To* SONIA *)*

Who are you?

SONIA

Sonia?

BALTHAZAR

Sonia who?

SONIA

You're very drunk.

BALTHAZAR

Days like these, Sonia, it's very important to be sober as a judge or just blind drunk — I chose the latter.

SONIA

Oh.

BALTHAZAR

You remember that, Sonia.

SONIA

Okay.

BALTHAZAR

Good. Now, *pa fuera.*

SONIA

*Pa fuera?*

BALTHAZAR

Goodbye. Go. Now.

SONIA

Um —

BALTHAZAR

Now!

*(*SONIA *exits.* BALTHAZAR *pokes* VIC. *)*

BALTHAZAR

Hey, wake up.

VICTOR

What time is it?

BALTHAZAR

Sssh. I don't know. Don't wake him up.

VICTOR

They said you weren't comin' back.

BALTHAZAR

Well, that's 'cuz they know me, Rick.

VICTOR

Vic.

BALTHAZAR

Vic. Yes, of course. Sorry, Vic.

VICTOR

So what's the word?

BALTHAZAR

Here.

VICTOR

What's this?

BALTHAZAR

Pants. Your pants. Wallet's gone, but…

VICTOR

Where'd they find my pants?

BALTHAZAR

By the river. Off the West Side Highway.

VICTOR

And what about Rose?

BALTHAZAR

The thing is —

VICTOR

What about Rose?!

BALTHAZAR

A coupla patrolmen, Vic, they found a large suitcase.

VICTOR

Suitcase?

BALTHAZAR

Yeah … They found half of her, Vic.

VICTOR

Half?

BALTHAZAR

They're comin' for the casket now. We're gonna bury that part of her at eleven.

VICTOR

Half?

BALTHAZAR

Why donchu siddown?

VICTOR

I don't wanna siddown. Whaddya mean, "half"?!

BALTHAZAR

Vic —

VICTOR

"Half"?! Where's the other half?!

BALTHAZAR

We think prolly the river.

VICTOR

The river?! What's she doin' in the river?!

BALTHAZAR

Vic, she's not doing anything in the river. She's gone. She was gone before any of this happened.

VICTOR

So that means this is all okay?!

BALTHAZAR

It's not okay.

VICTOR

Then go back out there and find her!

*(Pause)*

BALTHAZAR

Vic.

VICTOR

Jesus!

BALTHAZAR

I know.

VICTOR

Jesus H˙ Christ!

*(*VIC *sits, turning his back to* BALTHAZAR. *Silence.)*

BALTHAZAR

Vic?

VICTOR

What?

BALTHAZAR

Here. That's for you.

*(*BALTHAZAR *hands* VIC *a small rosary.* VIC *examines it.)*

VICTOR

Was this?

BALTHAZAR

No. It belonged to my son.

VICTOR

Your son?

BALTHAZAR

First Communion … Remember the guy with the ham sandwiches?

VICTOR

Yeah?

BALTHAZAR

I'm the guy with the ham sandwiches, Vic.

VICTOR

You?

BALTHAZAR

The morning my son disappeared? I had a hangover that morning. I let my seven-year-old boy go out and play … alone. That's the truth, Vic.

VICTOR

Geez.

BALTHAZAR

My son adored Sister Rose. I want you to know that. Adored her. Just like you.

VICTOR

Yeah?

BALTHAZAR

Couldn't get enough of her. "Sister Rose this," "Sister Rose, that" — and she, I could see that she took a real interest in him — sincere — He was a real smart kid, my boy, ninety-eighth percentile.

VICTOR

That's, uh, that's good.

BALTHAZAR

First parent/teacher meeting I ever went to, Sister Rose told me my Juan Jose was special. "Not bright … gifted."

VICTOR

Well she knew kids, thass for sure.

BALTHAZAR

I miss him a lot, Vic.

*(Pause)*

VICTOR

*(Re: the rosary)*

Look, I, I can't accept this —

BALTHAZAR

When my son was a baby, Vic —

VICTOR

Yeah?

BALTHAZAR

I was, I was doing undercover "buy and busts" at the time. I was a big deal back then.

VICTOR

Yeah?

BALTHAZAR

Anyway, I would get home round six aˑmˑ, and I useta like to take him out of his crib on to the fire escape. I'd sit on a milk crate with a little pillow on it, maybe a beer, and I'd just hold him, ya know — hold him like,

like this. You got kids, Vic?

VICTOR

Nieces and nephews.

BALTHAZAR

Well this one morning, it's breezy, right, nice breeze, and I'm spacing out, staring over at New Jersey, lost, and all the sudden I'm aware that he's stirring. So I look over my shoulder, and my boy, he's, he's feeling the breeze on him, and his face looks all puzzled — like he doesn't understand, right? And his little hands, Vic, they're doing this …

*(*BALTHAZAR *mimes his baby trying to catch the wind.)*

BALTHAZAR

He was trying, you know, my boy was trying to catch the wind, Vic … I always remembered that.

VICTOR

I bet that helps.

BALTHAZAR

It hurts, Vic … It hurts a lot.

*(Beat)*

*(*ROOFTOP *enters, but* INEZ *is gone.* VIC *and* BALTHAZAR *sit silently.* EDWIN *is still sleeping on the bench.)*

*(Blackout)*

*(End of play)*